

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1           1.       A method for closing a communications stream between a first terminal  
2       and a second terminal in a communications system, the communications stream having  
3       repeating time slots in a time division channel comprising:  
4                sending a closing message in a first slot from the first terminal to the second  
5       terminal to request that the communications stream be closed;  
6                listening to the communications stream at the first terminal to determine whether  
7       any messages are sent from the second terminal to the first terminal in a slot after the first  
8       slot; and  
9                closing the stream, if no further messages are received from the second terminal.

1           2.       The method of Claim 1, wherein the repeating time slots comprise a set of  
2       repeating slots for the second terminal and wherein closing the stream comprises closing  
3       the stream if no further messages are received in the next slot for the second terminal  
4       after sending the closing message.

1           3.       The method of Claim 1, wherein the communications stream comprises a  
2       data traffic channel and wherein sending a closing message comprises sending a closing  
3       message in the data traffic channel.

1           4.       The method of Claim 1, wherein closing the stream comprises sending a  
2       further closing message in a second slot from the first terminal to the second terminal, if a  
3       further message is received from the second terminal.

1           5.       The method of Claim 1, further comprising checking a transmit buffer in  
2       the first terminal and wherein sending a closing message is performed in response to an  
3       absence of data in the buffer.

1           6.       The method of Claim 1, wherein sending a closing message is performed  
2 in response to an absence of data in a transmit buffer for more than a determined amount  
3 of time.

1           7.       The method of Claim 1 wherein the determined amount of time is selected  
2 to be greater than the amount of time required to close the communications stream and  
3 then open a new communications stream.

1           8.       The method of Claim 1, wherein listening to the communications stream  
2 comprises listening at the first terminal in a sequence of slots after the first slot, the  
3 number of slots in the sequence being determined by the possibility of being able to  
4 distinguish a message from the second terminal from noise in the channel.

1           9.       The method of Claim 8 wherein the number of slots in the sequence is  
2 determined by a class of modulation being used for the stream.

1           10.      A machine-readable medium having stored thereon data representing  
2 sequences of instructions which, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to  
3 perform operations comprising:

4           sending a closing message in a first slot of a communications stream from the first  
5 terminal to the second terminal to request that the communications stream be closed the  
6 stream having repeating time slots in a time division channel;

7           listening to the communications stream at the first terminal to determine whether  
8 any messages are sent from the second terminal to the first terminal in a slot after the first  
9 slot; and

10          closing the stream, if no further messages are received from the second terminal.

1           11.      The medium of Claim 10, wherein the repeating time slots comprise a set  
2 of repeating slots for the second terminal and wherein the instructions for closing the

3 stream comprise further instructions which, when executed by the machine, cause the  
4 machine to perform further operations comprising closing the stream if no further  
5 messages are received in the next slot for the second terminal after sending the closing  
6 message.

1 12. The medium of Claim 10, wherein the instructions comprise further  
2 instructions which, when executed by the machine, cause the machine to perform further  
3 operations comprising checking a transmit buffer in the first terminal and wherein the  
4 instructions for sending a closing message are performed in response to an absence of  
5 data in the buffer.

1 13. The medium of Claim 10, wherein the instructions for sending a closing  
2 message are performed in response to an absence of data in a transmit buffer for more  
3 than a determined amount of time.

1 14. A method of determining to close a communications stream between a  
2 first terminal and a second terminal in a communications system comprising:  
3 checking a transmit buffer for data to transmit in the stream;  
4 waiting for a determined amount of time;  
5 rechecking the transmit buffer; and  
6 determining to close the communications stream, if there is no data in the transmit  
7 buffer to transmit after the checking and the rechecking.

1           15.     The method of Claim 14, wherein the determined amount of time is  
2     selected to be greater than the amount of time required to close the communications  
3     stream and then open a new communications stream.

1           16.     The method of Claim 14, further comprising:  
2             determining whether previously transmitted data included a data boundary value;  
3             comparing the boundary value to the data previously transmitted; and  
4             if the data boundary value is satisfied then determining to close the  
5     communications stream.

1           17.     The method of Claim 16, wherein the data boundary value indicates the  
2     size of a data packet to be transmitted.

1           18.     The method of Claim 16, wherein the data boundary value indicates  
2     streaming data with no predetermined endpoint.

1           19.     The method of Claim 16, wherein the data boundary value indicates a  
2     diagnostic sequence.

1           20.     The method of Claim 14, further comprising:  
2             checking a higher layer protocol to determine whether all data units to be  
3     transmitted have been received; and  
4             determining to close the communications stream, if all of the data units to be  
5     transmitted have been received and there is no data in the data buffer after the checking  
6     and rechecking.

1           21.     A machine-readable medium having stored thereon data representing  
2     sequences of instructions which, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to  
3     perform operations comprising:

4 checking a transmit buffer a first terminal for data to transmit in a  
5 communications stream;  
6 waiting for a determined amount of time;  
7 rechecking the transmit buffer; and  
8 determining to close the communications stream, if there is no data in the transmit  
9 buffer to transmit after the checking and the rechecking.

1 22. The medium of Claim 21, further comprising instructions which, when  
2 executed by the machine, cause the machine to perform further operations comprising:  
3 determining whether previously transmitted data included a data boundary value;  
4 comparing the boundary value to the data previously transmitted; and  
5 if the data boundary value is satisfied then determining to close the  
6 communications stream.

1 23. The medium of Claim 22, wherein the data boundary value indicates the  
2 size of a data packet to be transmitted.

1 24. The medium of Claim 21, further comprising instructions which, when  
2 executed by the machine, cause the machine to perform further operations comprising:  
3 checking a higher layer protocol to determine whether all data units to be  
4 transmitted have been received; and  
5 determining to close the communications stream, if all of the data units to be  
6 transmitted have been received and there is no data in the data buffer after the checking  
7 and rechecking.